

Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal

Background

Junction Yard

For more than a century, a large railroad yard has existed between John Kronk, Livernois, and Dix extending west to about Miller Street. This yard is just a short distance west of the junction of the intersection of mainline railroad tracks running east-west and another line running roughly north-south.

The Truck/Train Partnership

A significant volume of freight being moved by railroads today is being delivered to the rail line on a truck. Following the train trip, it is again moved by truck to its final destination.

Intermodal Freight

These movements between rail and truck are termed intermodal freight transportation. The most common movements involve transferring containers or trailers between railroad flatcars and trucks. This activity usually takes place at a location called a terminal.

The Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal (DIFT)

The Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal project consists of the development of a complex of terminals operated by several railroads, which will provide efficient intermodal service to business and industry. Presently, there are two intermodal terminals in close proximity in Southwest Detroit. These are: Junction/Livernois Yard (operated by CSX and Norfolk Southern) and the newly-created yard behind the Michigan Central Depot just north of Bagley (operated by Canadian Pacific Railway). There is another smaller area that may be used for intermodal freight just south of Clark Street adjacent to the old Cadillac plant. These three form the nucleus of what is referred to as the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal, the DIFT. There are six other intermodal freight terminals in the Detroit and Southeast Michigan area.

The Inevitability of Growth

Because of the growth of intermodal rail freight, the amount of freight moving through the DIFT yards is certain to grow over the foreseeable future. Whether or not this will require more land for the railyards themselves is the subject of another study. Intermodal traffic using terminals in Southwest Detroit will grow significantly, whether developed independently by the railroads or in cooperation with MDOT.

Involving the Nearby Community

It is the charge of this study to evaluate the impacts of this movement of trucks into and out of the intermodal freight terminal(s). It is important that the movement of the freight that drives jobs and economic growth be facilitated. It is also important that the movement of these trucks to and from the interstates and other local points respect the quality of life of the residents of Southwest Detroit. The current DIFT Study is designed to address this issue.

For the remainder of the year, MDOT and its consultants will be estimating these truck movements, evaluating their impacts, and making recommendations to protect the neighborhoods as much as possible. This can only be done well if the neighbors are involved.